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Navy Medicine Comptroller Supports Students as U.S. Senate Youth Program Mentor

Filed under COMMUNITY SUPPORT U.S. NAVY (NO COMMENTS)

Lt. Tony Coleman, MSC, comptroller, [Naval Hospital Beaufort, S.C.](#)



Military members of the U.S. Senate Youth Program at the Pentagon Memorial. (Photo by Jakub Mosur)

I recently had the opportunity to serve as a [U.S. Senate Youth Program \(USSYP\)](#) Military Mentor. USSYP is an intensive weeklong educational experience sponsored by the United States Senate, funded by the [Hearst Foundation](#).

The program brings 104 outstanding high school students from across the nation and [Department of Defense Education Activity](#) who are interested in pursuing careers in public service to our nation’s capital for “Washington Week,” an action-packed itinerary where they gain an in-depth view of the Senate and the federal government. Students are also afforded a deeper understanding of the interrelationship of the legislative, judicial and executive branches.

To assist in this process, the Department of Defense (DoD) provides a “purple team” of 17 military officers from each service branch to serve as mentors during Washington Week. This year’s mentors consisted of three Air Force, one Air National Guard, three Army, three Coast Guard, four Navy, and three U.S. Marine Corps Officers.

We each were entrusted the care of six to eight student delegates from

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Lt. Anthony Coleman with U.S. Senate Youth Program student delegates. (Photo by Jakub Mosur)

the time they arrived at the airport to midnight on the last day of the program, encompassing every minute in between. My delegates were from Indiana, Texas, Missouri, the District of Columbia, North Carolina, and New York. Our day usually began with a 0645 muster with our assigned delegates prior to breakfast in order to brief the upcoming activities of the day, ensure proper clothing and answer any questions they may

have. They were extremely intelligent young adults. We discussed the significance of efficiencies in the proposed DoD funding cuts and how those cuts would effect our military strategy shift from the Middle East to the Asian Pacific. In between these discussions, myself and the other mentors were managing total group movements from one high-level venue to the next while providing guidance to the students in the protocol and comportment of each event. We escorted the students to and from briefings, meetings and receptions with U.S. Senators, President Obama, Supreme Court Justice Scalia, cabinet members, federal agency leaders, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund and senior members of the national media. Each day ended around 2230 with a military mentor huddle to discuss the next 48 hours’ movements and activities, and to share lessons learned. In addition to getting to know these phenomenal students, the joint mentor environment was an awesome opportunity to experience inner-service cohesion and share best practices of how to safely execute our mission. Overall, this was an enlightening experience. The days were demanding and equally rewarding. The delegates were intelligent, insightful and overcome with curiosity not only about our nation’s inner workings, but with our military. Many of them had never met a member of the Armed Forces, let alone spend a week up close and personal with one, let alone many from different services.

I was proud to shape the opinion of the military to our delegates and perhaps their families back home as a small part of their “Washington Week” story. It was an honor to represent the Navy and Navy Medical Service Corps with enthusiasm and pride.

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President Barack Obama addressing the U.S. Senate Youth Program delegates. (Photo by Jakub Mosur)

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